

Pownalborough Court House
Cedar Grove, Dresden, Maine

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District of Maine

Historic American Buildings Survey
Josiah T. Tubby, District Officer
537 Congress Street, Portland, Maine

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"POWNBOROUGH COURT HOUSE"

Cedar Grove, Dresden, Lincoln County, Maine

Owner

Oliver Canby

Date of Erection

1761

Builder

Major Samuel Goodwin, Agent for the Plymouth Company. Work of building under the general direction of Gershom Flagg, a kind of master builder who was termed a "housewright and glazier".

Present Condition

The interior of the building has had slight alterations. Space formerly occupied by the court room (45' x 20') has been partitioned off to form three rooms. The court room occupied the rear half of the second floor of the structure and it is believed that the bench was toward the center of the building. Sash has nearly all been replaced. Exterior walls are clapboarded. Blinds have been added to the windows in recent years. Gutters have been installed.

Number of Stories

Three

Materials of Construction

Foundation stone. The building has the appearance of being built directly on the ground. The first floor level is about a foot above the ground level. Floors are pine. The building originally had twenty-four light windows. Exterior walls were originally shingled. Some of the interior walls have been plastered. The walls of the original kitchen at the left of the central hall are plain board finish, painted white. The walls and ceilings of the third floor rooms show heavy timber construction. Walls are of pine set perpendicularly. Brick in fireplaces and chimneys laid in clay. Stairs throughout the three floors of the court house are of thick plank. In the hall of the court house, pine boards have been set vertically to form staving. First floor walls in the hall have been painted but through second and third floors, the walls are unfinished.

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Other Existing Records

Old Colonial Houses in Mains by Emma Huntington Nason.
History of Dresden, Maine by Charles Edwin Allen.

Additional Data

Ref. History of Dresden, Maine. On the 12th of December 1760, Samuel Goodwin certified on the plan of the three acre lots that thers was: "A House to Hold the County Courts in of three Story High and 45 feet long and 44 feet wide now abuilding by the Kennebec in Pownalborough on Kennebeck River".

The court house is built on the former site of the parade ground of Fort Shirley. The easternmost blockhouss of Fort Shirley with the land on which it stood was appropriated for a Gaol.

The court house building was used by the Plymouth Company as a court of law and as a place of worship. Major Samuel Goodwin and his family occupied the living quarters on the east side of the building and also conducted a tavern there.

Evidently people from far and wide were in the habit of attending court as in 1767 a complaint was made, stating that strangers attending court "have to lodge on the floor, or in barns, or sit up all night by the fire".

The History of Dresden, Maine, states that there were whipping posts and stocks near the court house, and several hangings took place on a hill near the building where they could be plainly viewed from the Kennebec River.

John Adams, later president of the U. S. and Robert Treat Paine, ons of the signers of the Declaration of Independence pleaded law cases at the Pownalborough Court House.

The Court House was Dresden's first post office and was used as such for many years.

Chas. E. Jannell

Approved:

James J. Tully

Date: Dec 18 1936

TW 4/4/37